

Her Christmas Angel--Or His

A CHRISTMAS STORY
By Sally Chamberlin

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"Whom do you think I saw today, Susan Strong?" said Ned, with his winning smile, as he walked into the room of his invalid sister at the end of his day's work.

"Eleanor Carrington," replied Susan promptly.

"Surprise overspread his beaming countenance. 'That's exactly who it was, but how in time did you guess?' 'A sort of second sight we invalids have, dear boy,' answered his sister. 'The moment you appeared around that curtain a sensation swept over me which I always used to have when I saw her standing across the aisle in church with her unapproachable bearing and her calm, Madonna-like face. I fairly worshipped her, Ned. Where did you see her?'"

"At the Grand Central depot. She was helping a crippled boy out of a cab when his crutch fell under the wheels. Maybe I wasn't Mr. Johnny-on-the-spot! My, but she is a queen!"

More than this he never said of any girl, for it was Susan's greatest cross that her stalwart brother, the apple of her eye, had been obliged to give up his young life, social and athletic, to bear the financial burden of her illness.

Ned Strong had held the record for hammer throwing at his university and had been candidate for the next year's football team when he had been forced to put it all behind him and turn his attention to sterner realities, including exorbitant bills presented by the specialists employed to relieve his sister.

For two years she had suffered with an affection of the knee which even the most eminent surgeons had been unable to name. For some weeks now she had been fastened in a brace which gave comparative relief and permitted her to sit up in bed, and with the cessation from suffering came renewed eagerness to hear of the beautiful outside world.

"Eleanor doesn't seem to be going in very strong for society," Ned continued, perching himself on the edge of Susan's couch. "When I was lunching with Billy Sanford yesterday he said she had spent almost the entire summer going to and from New York with children whom she was having treated at the hospital for cripples on Forty-second street."

"Why, Ned, that's the hospital where Dr. Gibbs is head surgeon. He was telling me about those patient little children only yesterday when he was working on my knee."

"Sure enough. I telephoned him this morning and he says he has a new contraption which he will try in a week or so that will simply discount the brace you have on now."

"I shall ask him if he knows Eleanor."

"Don't you worry. He isn't the kind of man who would let such a beauty pass unnoticed--and, uncultivated--though I understand she's spoken for. Billy says Senator Elkus is the favored suitor."

"He's too old for her." This in a tone of disappointment.

"That's the way of the world, Sue. The man that's got the money is the only one who need come round. The rest of us poor devils can stand back and adore silently. Think of the cripples she could have treated on the senator's money!" He flung back his shoulders as if throwing off an ugly thought, then he bent tenderly over the invalid. "Oh, Sue, it is splendid to see you free from pain once more, and with a rousing kiss, emblem of all his devotion and self sacrifice, he strode away to his solitary dinner."

In one of her wakeful night watches Susan lived back in the year which had preceded her illness. It came to her like a revelation that in those days Ned had not exactly stood back and adored in silence. Eleanor Carrington had shared all his college enthusiasm, and though Susan, lively, golden haired little sister of a big strapping brother, had never entirely entered into these interests, in the new light of understanding vouchsafed invalids as a compensation for physical deprivations she saw why Eleanor Carrington had suddenly dropped out of her brother's life.

When Dr. Gibbs called the next morning he was surprised at her animation.

"You want Christmas work to do? Now, see here, you're not worrying about bills and things?"

She shook her head. "I just want to make some one happy for Christmas. Don't you think I could dress some dolls for the hospital children?"

"Just the thing to make you forget the occasional twinges in this knee--that is, if you don't sit up too long at a time. I'll speak to Miss Carrington, who is chairman of our Christmas committee."

And he did not dream why the sudden, glad light came into Susan Strong's eyes.

Two days later Eleanor Carrington's carriage stopped before the humble, Strong cottage. She brought into the sickroom a new and invigorating atmosphere.

"My dear girl, I have never heard of your illness. We have lived almost constantly in the country of late, and I seldom see you brother. Why didn't you let me know? I should have been so glad to come. And now you send for me that you may help me in my work. You make me feel so--so selfish."

Her rich furs dropped from her shoulders, and the tall, statuesque young

woman fell to her knees beside the little invalid with her delicate, pathetic face, big, wistful eyes and short, curling hair.

"Oh, you mustn't feel that way," said the girl as she stroked the fur with her wasted hand. "Ned has taken such good care of me, and I--well, I just need something to occupy my mind. Did you bring the dolls?"

"Dolls? Depends of them!" said Miss Carrington, with a happy catch in her voice. "But you must let me cut out the clothes. It is enough for you to sew."

This was the beginning of happy days for Susan Strong. Hardly an afternoon passed without a call from Eleanor, who wanted to see how the gay ladies from Paris, Berlin, Switzerland, Japan and Russia were coming on. Sometimes she laid aside her wraps and sewed with the invalid.

During these hours Susan learned many things, not only of the hospital work, but of Eleanor's life at home and in the social world. And, best of all, she learned that the rumors regarding the beautiful girl's engagement to Senator Elkus were without foundation.

Only once did Susan, wise little girl that she was, refer to Ned.

"If you happen to see Ned, don't tell him about this, will you? I don't want him to know until all the dolls are finished, and then we'll have a dress parade. Maybe he'll see the work has not hurt me, he--he will let me do something to help him--pay the bills."

Eleanor Carrington looked past the invalid, through the window, into the clear winter sunlight as if seeing a faraway picture.

"I do not think there is any danger of my seeing your brother."

But she was wrong. She saw him the very next day, when he came home earlier than usual. She had brought some holly to deck Susan's room, for Christmas was drawing near, and she had brought a beautifully embroidered dressing sack for the invalid also. Susan was tying the bow at the throat of her dainty gift and surveying herself in a small mirror. Eleanor was hanging a holly wreath above the dressing table, when she swung around suddenly, the gay wreath rolling to the floor. In the mirror she had caught sight of Ned Strong's amazed face. He was standing in the doorway.

"Oh, Ned, why did you come too soon?" cried Susan in mock dismay. In reality her heart was singing with very joy.

"Eleanor," said the man without moving from the doorway. She stooped to pick up the wreath, and when she stood up once more her color had come back and her composure was perfect.

"We were just fixing a little surprise for you," she said, offering her hand and meeting his glance squarely, "but I don't think you deserve it. You haven't played fair, Ned." His glance wavered from her face to the invalid's couch. Susan was bending over, tying a refractory bow in a doll's hat. Eleanor went on quietly.

"You might at least have told me why."

"I couldn't." His voice was very low. "I did not dare ask you to wait." She drew her breath sharply. "And yet you must have known."

A minute later Ned Strong bent over his sister's couch. The refractory bow had come to time. She looked up into his face with shining eyes.

"Susan, dear, you're our Christmas angel."

Stork Legends.
In an old collection of matronly stories entitled "The Gospel of the Distaff," printed at Bruges in 1475, this passage occurs: "When a stork builds her nest over a chimney it is a sign that the proprietor shall have wealth and long life." Ancient beliefs admitted that the stork protected buildings against lightning. It is a holy bird, and in certain German towns the arrival of the storks, heralds of spring, was announced with joyous blasts by the watchman on the tower. What is certain is that which Michelet says of the swallow may be applied to the stork. She has taken not only our house, but also our hearts.

Legends go still further. They consider storks as the incarnation of departed souls. In that metamorphosed capacity they have for mission to search the bottom of wells for the souls of newborn infants. In the whole of northern and central Germany they have their baby wells. Hamburg, too, had her "kindelbrunnen." This native faith has its origin in ancient mythology, which represents the stork, jointly with the peacock, as the favorite bird of Juno, goddess of maternity--French of Maurice Engelbart.

Beetle With Maxin Gun.
One of the instructors of a big university led the way to a small booth smiling with pride as he did so. "I want to show you a rare species of beetle," said he.

The beetle, which was a burnished blue, with a red head and red legs, lay partly hidden under a stone. The instructor advanced his finger slowly. The beetle waited, watchful and intrepid. The finger almost touched the insect, and then--puff, a cloud of blue smoke shot out, and under cover of this smoke the beetle beat a rapid retreat.

"Isn't that marvelous?" the instructor said. "And the littleascal can emit puff after puff--can fire gun after gun--nineteen or twenty to the minute. No wonder he is called the bombardier, is it?"

"This bombardier beetle is rare. He has in his body certain glands secreting a liquid which, on contact with the air, has the curious property of turning into a smoky vapor. The vapor is his defense against bigger beetles. Hidden under it, he seeks a new retreat."

There is to-day a crying need of a reformation in the treatment of the body. The basis of this reformation is to be found in the theses of Dr. R. V. Pierce, "Diseases which originate in the stomach must be cured through the stomach."

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ESTATE OF RAPHAEL INDOBO
Deceased.
Pursuant to the order of George E. Russell, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned, executors of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased, within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from prosecuting or recovering the same against the subscribers.

LOUIS A. SINDORF, Executor.
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Notice is hereby given that the accounts of the subscriber, executor of Julia E. Bliss, deceased, will be audited and stated by the Surrogate and reported for settlement to the Orphans' Court of the County of Essex, on Saturday, the 20th day of January next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

Dated December 8, 1905.
THEODORE M. NEVINS,
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ESTATE OF MARY JANE ANDREWS,
Deceased.
Pursuant to the order of George E. Russell, Surrogate of the County of Essex, this day made, on the application of the undersigned, executor of said deceased, notice is hereby given to the creditors of said deceased to exhibit their claims and demands against the estate of said deceased, within nine months from this date, or they will be forever barred from prosecuting or recovering the same against the subscriber.

CHARLES W. LEAVITT, Jr., Executor.

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Head & Back's Mouth Wash	25c	Oils, Castor, pint, 25c; gallon, 10c	
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Scrub's Talcum Powder, Carnation	25c	Salt, Epsom, pound	25c
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